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## REVIEWS.

*L'Ouvrier Américain.* Par E. LEVASSEUR. Paris: L. Larose, 1898.  
2 vols. Pp. 634, 516.

It is a great advantage to have our institutions and social conditions, as well as our literature, studied and presented to us by the French mind. Professor Levasseur must be heard with respect and attention. He has prepared himself for this investigation by valuable previous studies, by a large collection of documents and authorities, and by travel in this country. In these two volumes he has brought together a vast amount of information on a subject of transcendent importance.

The entire work is divided into three principal parts, which are designated: "The Workman at Work," "The Workman at Home," and "The Labor Questions." The method is to assemble significant data on each topic, and then to treat them critically, with a view to estimate the worth of various opinions, practical measures, and of legislation.

In the first part, "The Workman at Work," the author discusses, with ample fullness of details, the progress of American industry during the past fifty years, the productive force of machinery and labor, labor laws and the discipline of the factory, trade unions, wages of men, women, and children; the sweating system, competition of immigrants, negroes, and prisoners; strikes, boycotts, lockouts, blacklists, crises, and the causes which regulate nominal wages. In the second part, "The Workman at Home," we have discussions of the budgets of households, food, clothing, housing, building and loan associations, saving, and real wages. In the third part, "Labor Questions," there is a treatment of fortune-making and democracy in America, the protective system, public relief of the indigent, patronage and profit-sharing, workingmen's associations and coöperation, conciliation and arbitration, and socialism. Finally, the author presents his own point of view, and ventures on a modest prophecy of the next twenty or thirty years. It will be convenient to use the author's own summary of the argument which runs through the work.

American industry has had, during the past century, and especially during the last fifty years, an ample and magnificent development. Production has increased nearly fivefold during the last thirty years (1860-90). None of the great nations of the world have equaled the United States in this respect. This industry shows a marked tendency to concentration. Production increases, but the number of establishments diminishes. For example, the manufacturers of agricultural machinery numbered 2,076 in 1870 and produced a value of \$52,000,000; and in 1890 the number of factories had fallen to 910, but these produced \$82,000,000. The small industry retires. The "trusts" are inevitable; they are the result of liberty, and they are also a menace to liberty.

The American is an inventor; the number of patents issued after examination is a proof of it. The American is quick to use improved methods, and competition and high wages compel him to adopt the best appliances. When wages rise, managers are prompted to substitute machinery for hand work; and with larger production wages tend to rise. Managers cannot afford to tolerate indolent workmen at high wages; thus workmen become more alert and energetic. Will the machine drive out the workman? The workman is tempted to think machines are his enemy, especially at the time of change. All economic evolution occasions loss of capital, displacement of men, individual cases of suffering, which social sympathy seeks to mitigate. It is unfair to judge the general tendency from short views. From the dawn of civilization improved tools have caused occasional pain, but, on the whole, steady improvement for the race. Census returns show an absolute and relative increase in the number of workmen, and consumption absorbs the products of industry. The working class, in compensation for passing crises, enjoys a triple advantage—a larger demand for labor, wages higher on account of increased productivity, and commodities at a lower price. All society participates in the last source of gain.

Demand and supply react upon each other. Americans boast of the largest consumption to each inhabitant, and many of their economists consider this intensity of consumption as the stimulant of their industry, and as the cause of their high wages. There is never too much wealth, although it may be improperly distributed. The American business manager goes straight forward, seeing gain and desirous of securing it quickly. Therefore he uses machinery, and requires of his workmen all they can do. He has himself arisen from the working

class, and has not always the polish of education. He calculates closely. He is occupied with his own business and not with that of others, and thus becomes profoundly *individualistic*, often egoistic and harsh with his fellow-citizens. When work is done and wages paid, manager and workmen think they are no further bound to each other—a right judgment from a legal point of view. From the social point of view this individualism is seen to exclude schemes of patronage. The American workman wishes to be independent, and recognizes no obligation of gratitude to his employer. He is in the shop on a bargain and not as a child. He goes where he thinks he can do best for himself.

Immigration is offensive to the working class, because it intensifies competition for wages. But, since America owes its industrial advance to immigration, it cannot be entirely suppressed. The mold of character is an Anglo-Saxon type. The English, Scotch, and Germans have furnished the most highly esteemed element, and the Scandinavians only a little less. The Irish, spite of being less acceptable, are numerous enough to be politically strong; the Italians and the Slavs in a lower degree. The Canadians form a group suspected on account of their clannish ways, but are prized by employers because they will work for low wages. The French are too few to influence politics. The party of the workingmen has demanded and secured laws restrictive of immigration. The Chinese are entirely excluded. Contract labor, in spite of the employers, has been prohibited. Defectives are excluded on grounds of general welfare.

*Nominal* wages have, perhaps, doubled in fifty years. It is impossible, on account of the variety of conditions, to state an average. Perhaps \$1.75 to \$2 represents nearly the average in the United States, about double that in France. The wages of women are almost half those of men. Children under sixteen receive less than women. There are fewer married women in factories than are seen in Europe, a sign of better conditions. The number of women employed in industry has relatively diminished; that of children has decreased still more.

In America, as in Europe, there are *famine* wages, that is, wages which do not afford the income of married laborers. These are found chiefly in the sweated industries of clothing, and, while difficult to improve, affect comparatively few workmen. Real wages have increased even more than nominal wages, because the prices of most commodities have fallen, while wages were rising. The American

workman dresses well, enjoys good food, and has many amusements. His standard of life is highest of all workmen. There are very great differences of income, but the workmen have had a good share of all gains, and the improvements in transportation, schools, lighting, streets, and other public wealth are shared by them. This progress is due to science, invention, management, and labor, and each has reaped a benefit.

In order to meet the power of employers on better terms, the workmen have formed trade unions, and, in order to provide for emergencies, they have associated themselves in mutual-benefit societies. There are advantages and disadvantages in unions, but they cannot be repressed; they must be recognized, and they should be made legally responsible for their use of power. The outlook for schemes of arbitration and conciliation is not altogether hopeful, but they are worthy of consideration.

The "protective system" of tariffs is not regarded by the author as helpful to wage-earners. Charity and public relief are treated as palliatives, not as remedies. Patronage is not congenial to the American spirit. Profit-sharing has not been very successful. Coöperation has been carried forward chiefly in building and loan associations, while in societies for consumers or producers comparatively little progress has been made.

Socialism is defined and condemned. The author believes that the teachings by which it is propagated in America are dangerous and should be met by argument. The rapid rise of great fortunes, and the isolation of industrial classes in two hostile camps, tend to endanger social order. The problem of state intervention is pressing and difficult. Socialists urge extension of state functions as a stage in the way to final absorption of all business by government. The degree of intervention must be determined by convenience, not by general theory. Factory legislation is needed to protect the health of workmen, but it should not interfere with the liberty of capitalist managers. The hours of labor should not be fixed by law, but by free agreements, and trade unions may help to secure shorter hours. It is entirely legitimate to regulate the housing of the people by law.

Professor Levasseur criticises Professor Ely for confusing morals with political economy. They are separate sciences, but do not conflict. "It is an error, propagated in America as in Europe by reformers, that political economy is a science without compassion, because it studies economic facts and laws, and does not construct seductive

Utopias." The wage system is permanent, and the wisest friends of workingmen will seek to amend its operations, rather than invent some totally new method.

We shall not advance suddenly from egoism to altruism, from antagonism to solidarity, from wages system to coöperation, from capitalism to collectivism, from misery to happiness. Progress is slow. The dreams of Fourier in 1803 were not realized, and the dreams of socialists will fail. Yet there will be important changes and improvements. The general direction of the near future is indicated by what we see before us: an enlargement of industry, an extension of markets, a higher standard of living, urban congestion, a larger proportion of the population living upon wages and salaries, a wider field for the negroes in industries, a restriction of immigration, probably further rise in wages, an improved type of workingmen, increased and dangerous interference with industry by government as workingmen gain political control, more power for trade unions. Trusts will compete with trusts and be regulated by law, and each decade will present new problems.

It will be seen that the standpoint of the author is that of an economist who inclines to liberalism and individualism, rather than to socialism. He is a friendly critic of American character and methods. He has taken great pains to secure correct and adequate data from the best sources. The style is clear and interesting, and the matter of supreme importance. On some of the most critical points the statistical material is too scant and doubtful for absolute conclusions, and men will continue to interpret the tables by "estimates" in order to attain to peace of mind or vantage ground for controversy. This large and serious effort to reach a satisfactory view of the actual condition and prospects of American workmen leads us to a new appeal to the government to secure and furnish more reliable information. The book is an argument in favor of a permanent and richly equipped census bureau in the United States, and adequate labor bureaus in the various states.

C. R. HENDERSON.

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*France.* By JOHN EDWARD COURTENAY BODLEY. The Macmillan Co., 1898. Two volumes. Pp. vi+346 and vi+504. \$4.

THE author is in love with his subject, he has had remarkable facilities for knowing it, he writes with combined dignity and raciness, he interests the reader from the first word of the preface, and does not